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Secrecy Vow Ordered for Key Officials

Reagan Tightens Security, Drops Rule on Media

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WASHINGTON—The Reagan Administration Tuesday ordered officials involved in national security to sign a secrecy pledge and agree to cooperate in investigations of leaks of classified information.

The order, part of a crackdown President Reagan ordered on unauthorized disclosures of national security information, also strictly limits access by government officials to such information. In addition, it calls for Atty. Gen. William French Smith to review the effectiveness of existing laws on such disclosures.

However, the order was not as stringent as some intelligence officials had proposed. In fact, it dropped one provision of a Jan. 12 presidential directive that the press and some government information officers had criticized: a requirement that government employees get a senior official's permission before contacting the media and then file a written report on the contact.

Earlier Directive Supplanted

The order, signed by William P. Clark, Reagan's assistant for national security, superseded the Jan. 12 directive.

Reagan has spoken out frequently in recent weeks about leaks of national security information. In his Jan. 12 directive he referred to a "hemorrhage" of leaks and warned that "all legal methods" would be used to investigate the situation.

Reagan was particularly upset by a report in *Time* magazine that tipped the Administration's hand on the sale of jet fighters to Taiwan. It enraged the government of the People's Republic of China, which had not been informed beforehand.

One other story, out of the Pentagon, was a short article in the Washington Post saying crates of some new types of aircraft had been spotted in Cuba. After the story appeared, the crates were whisked away by the Cubans and have not been spotted since by U.S. surveillance.

'A Determined Effort'

David R. Gergen, Reagan's communications director, said the new order "reflects a determined effort by all concerned to draw a proper balance between the legitimate need of the public's right to know and the need of the government in protecting classified information."

Clark ordered all departments to hold the number of persons having access to national security information to an "absolute minimum" and to "strictly control document dissemination and reproduction to carry out existing law."

His order sets up a system under which each copy of a document circulated by the National Security Council will be affixed with a numbered cover sheet bearing a notation that includes the secrecy pledge and agreement to cooperate in investigations. The cover sheet contains this notice:

"The attached document contains sensitive National Security Council information. It is to be read and discussed only by persons authorized by law."

"Your signature acknowledges you are such a person and your promise you will show or discuss information contained in the document only with persons who are authorized by law to have access to this document."

"Persons handling this document acknowledge he or she knows and understands the security law relating thereto and will cooperate fully with any lawful investigation by the United States government into any unauthorized disclosure of classified information contained herein."

The order requests Atty. Gen. Smith to convene by March 1 an interagency group to report to the President on the effectiveness of existing statutes and executive orders prohibiting unauthorized disclosure of classified information.

'Chilling Effect' Forces Change

Gergen said Clark had dropped the provision in the Jan. 12 directive regulating media contacts because of a feeling that it had "a chilling effect" on government-press relations.

After the directive was issued, that provision was criticized by newsmen, including Barrie Dunsmore of ABC-TV, president of the State Department Correspondents Assn., who wrote Clark a letter saying the directive already had caused some officials to cancel appointments with journalists.

Clark met with Dunsmore and several other reporters Monday before deciding to delete that provision from his order.

After the new order was issued, Dunsmore said, "I'm delighted that the section on media contacts was dropped. When I talked with Clark Monday, the draft of the order we were shown still had that section in it, and it would have been devastating if it had been implemented."

Speaking of the Administration's recent anti-leak activities and the new Clark order, Gergen said:

"What much of this endeavor of the last few weeks has done clearly—beyond and above the four corners of this document—is send a message, through the ranks that the President regards the unauthorized disclosure of classified information as a serious matter. At the same time, he recognizes the need for a continued flow of legitimate information, and it (the order) is intended to recognize that flow and permit it to go forward unimpeded."